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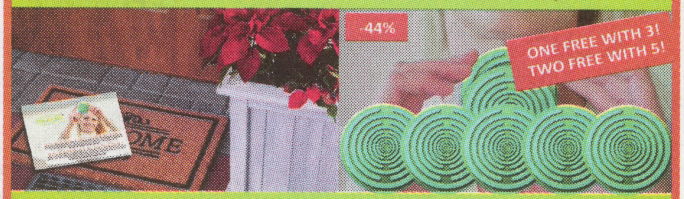

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Forging a Brighter Tomorrow

As we step into a new year, we find ourselves at a profound moment in time—one that invites us to consider not just where we are heading, but who we wish to become. The promise of this fresh calendar year is more than a simple turning of the page; it is a chance to reflect, reset and reimagine how we engage with the world around us.

The year ahead offers us an opportunity to renew our commitment to freedom—not only in the political sense, but in the autonomy of our minds, hearts and spirits. True liberty begins with awareness: an acknowledgment of how our daily choices shape not only our personal lives but also the collective trajectory of our planet. From the foods we consume to the values we uphold, every decision ripples outward, influencing the larger web of life.

Each January invites us to reflect on the passage of time and the lessons we've gathered along the way. These reflections remind us of the truths we carry forward while offering the possibility of transformation. As we step into this year, we are called to navigate this moment with courage and wisdom, using it as a foundation to build a life of greater integrity, harmony and connection.

What legacy do we want to leave for future generations? This question resonates deeply as the world grapples with pressing challenges—from environmental degradation to social divides. Yet, even in the face of uncertainty, there lies immense potential. Seeds of change, sown with care and nurtured with intention, can yield a thriving garden of solutions—innovations that honor the Earth, embrace diversity and elevate the human spirit.

This year, let us resolve to align our actions with our values. Begin by nurturing yourself and those around you. Engage in practices that ground and inspire you—whether through mindful meals, time in nature or cultivating relationships rooted in love and trust. Small, deliberate acts of care can rekindle a sense of purpose and spark a collective renewal.

Humanity possesses a remarkable ability to create, nurture and transform. In this spirit, we bring you stories that inspire growth, from fostering health and well-being to reimagining sustainability and strengthening community bonds. Our aim is to empower you to take ownership of your unique journey.

As publishers, we remain committed to bringing you content that informs, inspires and uplifts. We believe in the power of collective wisdom to guide us through this pivotal time in history. Our vision for 2025 is that we all recognize our shared responsibility to one another and to our planet, choosing unity over division and courage over fear.

May this year be one of awakening and transformation, where each of us answers the call to be architects of a brighter future.

With warmest wishes for a hopeful new year,

Trina & John

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

natural awakenings

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Natural Awakenings is a network of natural lifestyle magazine publishers empowering local communities with knowledge, resources and connections to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.

MoldPro Offers Chemical-Free Mold Remediation Services in Michigan

MoldPro, Southeast Michigan's premier mold testing and remediation company, provides residents with a revolutionary, chemical-free approach to mold removal. Led by John DuBois, BS, CMI-CMR, CCMI, WRT and RRP, MoldPro stands out as the only service of its kind in Michigan, offering safe and non-toxic mold remediation.

DuBois' most recent certification as a Certified Commercial Mold Inspector (CCMI) from the Professional Mold Inspection Institute further cements MoldPro's commitment to staying at the forefront of mold remediation practices. This expertise enables the company to deliver advanced solutions, including mold biotoxin testing—a critical method for identifying harmful mold gases linked to biotoxin illnesses. These services are particularly vital for individuals experiencing unexplained health issues and seeking environmental clarity.

MoldPro specializes in serving clients affected by mold-related illnesses, combining in-depth inspections with innovative remediation techniques that eliminate mold without introducing hazardous chemicals. This approach is part of a broader commitment to promoting healthier living environments and supporting the natural wellness goals of its clients.

In a time when many remediation methods still rely on caustic chemicals, MoldPro offers a safer alternative, providing peace of mind to homeowners and businesses alike.

Location: Milan. To make an appointment or for more information, call 734-439-8800 or visit MoldProLLC.com. See ad page 29.

Natural Product Sciences Degree at Concordia University Builds Leaders in Health and Sustainability

For individuals that are passionate about health, wellness and sustainability and are seeking a fulfilling career, Concordia University Wisconsin offers an excellent online degree program blending science and natural health principles. Concordia University is now enrolling students for its cutting-edge Natural Product Sciences master's degree and certificate programs. These provide an innovative, comprehensive curriculum that builds trusted leaders in discovering, developing and advancing natural products.

Whether a person is a returning college student looking to pursue further education, a working professional who seeks a new career path or one who simply wishes to gain wisdom and open doors to possibility, this program is worth considering. With ever-increasing interest in holistic treatment and plant-based wellness resources, a degree like this will only become more sought after.

The program provides flexible learning options, making it accessible to working professionals and students from diverse backgrounds. Courses focus on areas including nutraceuticals and medicinal plants, natural product formulation, pharmacognosy and the sustainable sourcing of ingredients. It prepares graduates for careers in the natural health industry, product development, scientific research and more.

Participants will benefit from expert faculty, interactive learning experiences and a focus on real-world applications. Graduates can look forward to contributing to the growing demand for natural, science-based health solutions in both professional and entrepreneurial capacities.

For more information or to apply, visit CUW.edu/NPS. Interested individuals can also contact the admissions team through the website for additional guidance. See ad on page 25.

Herbal Medicine Certification Series 2025 Open for Enrollment

Mary Light, ND, MH, LMT, and a natural health educator, will present the 2025 Herbal Medicine Certification Series. This hands-on, experiential program beginning this month offers an in-depth exploration of herbal medicine and the natural health paradigm. Classes are held every third Saturday through December, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., in the Liberty Road and Wagner vicinity of Ann Arbor (West side).

The series, designed for both beginners and seasoned practitioners, integrates traditional naturopathic theory and practical skills. Participants will complete a portfolio of monthly assignments focusing on the Eight Pillars of Natural Medicine, approached through the physiological body systems. The curriculum emphasizes the thoughtful application of herbal remedies to enhance self-reliance and wellness.

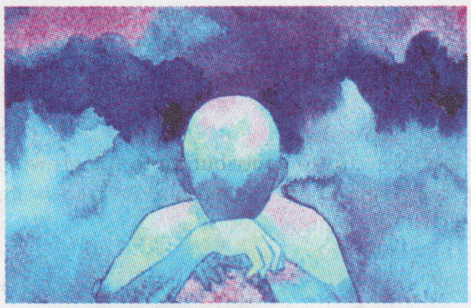
This unique opportunity not only equips attendees with a certificate in herbal medicine, but also fosters a profound understanding

of how to engage with nature's pharmacy.

Light, a respected advocate for natural health, emphasizes, "Herbal medicine is the medicine of the home. It gives us the ability to become more self-reliant."

Tuition for the program is $2,800, with a payment plan available. Registration is now open, and only five spots remain. For more information or to apply, call 734-769-7794 or download the application at NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net. See ad page 29.

Specialized Therapy for Mental Wellness



Lotus Consulting, a leading provider of counseling and psychological services in Ann Arbor, is expanding its suite of services to address a wide spectrum of mental health needs. With a mission to provide deeply compassionate care in a safe, judgment-free environment, Lotus Consulting offers specialized support for stress and anxiety management, depression and mood disorders, loss and grief, life transitions, identity work and more.

The practice is renowned for its expertise in working with eating disorders, body image concerns, addictions and student mental health. Lotus Consulting's multidisciplinary team of licensed therapists utilizes evidence-based approaches such as mindfulness-based cognitive behavioral therapies to help clients build psychological flexibility, regulate emotions and pursue meaningful, valued living.

Lotus Consulting accepts multiple insurance providers, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Blue Care Network, Aetna, United Healthcare and more, ensuring accessible care for diverse populations.

Location: 204 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. For more information or to make an appointment, call 517-203-1113 or visit LotusConsultingPLLC.com.

Holistic Wellness for Pregnancy and Parenting

Ann Arbor Birth & Family, a trusted resource for perinatal support in Washtenaw County, now offers an expanded range of services designed to empower families through every stage of their journey, from fertility concerns to postpartum recovery. With a team of highly experienced doulas, childbirth educators, therapists and specialists, the center is committed to delivering exceptional care tailored to meet the diverse needs of families.

Families in the Ann Arbor area can access birth and postpartum doula services, prenatal yoga, childbirth and newborn care classes, as well as specialized support like pelvic floor therapy, lactation consulting and sleep coaching. These services are designed to provide comprehensive physical and emotional support, equipping parents with the tools and confidence needed to thrive during pregnancy, birth and the early days of parenting.

With over 150 years of combined experience and having served more than 3,500 families, Ann Arbor Birth & Family is a trusted partner for both clients and healthcare professionals in the community.

Location: 4555 Connor Ct., Ypsilanti. For more information or to make an appointment, call 717-542-6925 or visit AnnArborBirth.com.

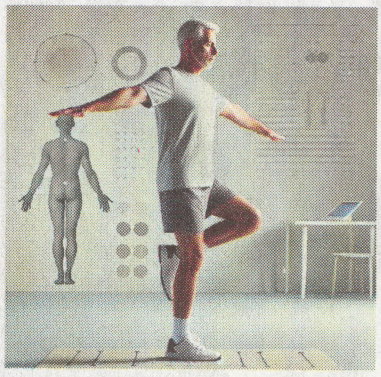
Discover Healing in Natural Surroundings

EarthWell Retreat Center, nestled in the heart of Michigan, invites individuals and groups to experience its unique offerings designed to promote harmony with nature, self and others. With eco-friendly accommodations, personalized wellness programs and farm-to-table meal options, EarthWell provides an unparalleled retreat experience.

Situated on 140 acres of rolling prairies, forests, creeks and wetlands, EarthWell serves as a sanctuary for mindfulness meditation, yoga and nature connection. Visitors can enjoy off-grid eco-cabin and tent rentals, daily yoga and meditation classes, and extensive nature trails, all crafted to nourish the mind, body and soul. The center also hosts group retreats focused on building inclusive, whole-hearted community through mindfulness and shared wellness practices.

Open for private rentals Thursday through Sunday, EarthWell also offers venue bookings for daytime and overnight events seven days a week on a case-by-case basis. For those seeking a serene escape or an enriching group experience, the EarthWell Retreat Center provides the perfect setting.

Location: 18580 Grass Lake Rd., Manchester. For more information or to arrange for a stay, call 989-442-6779 or visit EarthWellRetreat.com.



Age-Related Balance Issues Studied

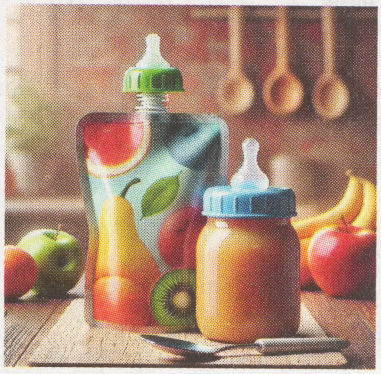
In a study published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, 40 adults over 50 completed gait, grip strength, knee strength and balance tests. The gait test consisted of a self-paced walk back and forth on an eight-meter-long walkway. The strength tests were performed seated on a custom-made device that isolated the wrist and knee of the participant's dominant side. For the balance tests, participants stood on both legs with their eyes open for 30 seconds, then on both legs with their eyes closed for 30 seconds. With eyes open, they also stood on their dominant leg for 30 seconds,then switched to their non-dominant leg for another 30 seconds.

The researchers found that the one-legged test on the non-dominant leg showed the highest rate of decline with age. A diminishment in the ability to complete this one-legged balance test, especially for those that cannot balance for five seconds, indicates a significant propensity for falls that hospitalize millions of seniors each year.

Disadvantages of Food Pouches for Children

Sales of children's food pouches with plastic spouts have increased by 900 percent since 2010 and now outsell jarred baby food purees. They are convenient, cost-effective and easy for kids to use without assistance. Traditionally, parents have spoon-fed pureed food from a jar for the first few months of a baby's life. The pouches contain a single ingredient or a mix of vegetables, grains, yogurt and meat.

A 2019 study in *Nutrition Today* found that the food pouches they examined contained significantly more added sugar and



fruit juice concentrate than jarred and other packaged toddler foods. Healthcare professionals have raised concerns that overreliance on the pouches could interfere with nutrition; long-term food preferences; dental hygiene, because the soft food sticks to teeth before being washed away; and speech and language development, as children miss the opportunity to manipulate their tongue and jaw when swallowing lumpy, textured foods. Children reliant on the smooth, sweet taste delivered by the pouches may also develop aversions to natural fruits and vegetables.

Homeopathic Treatment for COVID-19

A clinical audit conducted by Health Services Research sought to assess the effectiveness of homeopathic interventions administered in 2020 for 305 outpatients with COVID-19 symptoms. Homeopathy is the treatment of health conditions by minute doses of natural substances. As there is no standard homeopathic remedy, the treatments covered by the audit were individualized for each patient.

Published in *Integrative Medicine Reports,* the audit reported that 70 percent of the patients experienced a full recovery, while 14.4 percent showed no improvement. Most cases (74.4 percent) were resolved within 21 days and 29.2 percent were resolved in less than five days. The authors of the audit also noted that homeopathy was easy to administer and there were no adverse reactions.

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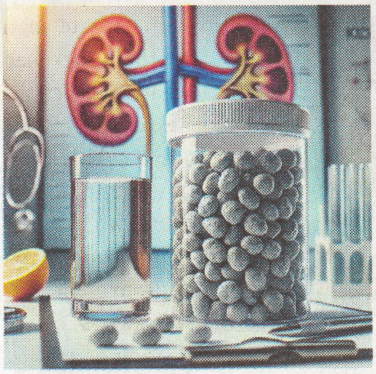

Magnesium To Prevent Kidney Stones

In a study involving 76 adults published in the *Natural Medicine Journal*, researchers evaluated the effectiveness of magnesium supplements to reduce the risk of developing kidney stones. The subjects were divided into three groups; two of the groups took 120 milligrams of either magnesium oxide or magnesium citrate three times a day for eight weeks, while a control group took a placebo. A urine analysis was performed on each participant at the start of the study and after eight weeks.

The researchers found that magnesium citrate significantly reduced 24-hour urine oxalate levels and calcium oxalate supersaturation—two indicators of kidney stone risk. A reduction in the urinary excretion of calcium is believed to reduce the chances of developing kidney stones.

Cases of Cannabis-Related Syndrome Double

Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) resulting from long-term use of marijuana is characterized by nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain every few weeks to months. CHS symptoms typically begin abruptly, within 24 hours of the last cannabis use, and may be relieved by hot baths or showers, which leads some people to bathe compulsively. Hospitalized patients' symptoms are managed with intravenous fluids and anti-nausea drugs, but the most effective treatment is to stop cannabis use altogether.

According to a report in *JAMA Network*, CHS now affects an estimated 2.75 million Americans each year, particularly among men between 16 and 34 years old. From 2017 to 2021, emergency room visits for CHS in the U.S. and Canada doubled. In addition to the gastrointestinal issues, CHS may also cause dehydration, acute kidney injury and low blood levels of chloride, potassium, sodium and bicarbonate. Frequent vomiting may erode tooth enamel and promote tooth loss. Rare severe complications include heart rhythm abnormalities, kidney failure, seizures and death. The rise in CHS coincides with the legalization of recreational cannabis and increases in tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration in cannabis products that cause intoxication.

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First Thoughts and New Experiences

Returning to Innocence Through Beginner's Mindset

by Carrie Jackson

The new year brings a fresh focus on growth and forward thinking. An intentional way to harness this is to adopt the Zen Buddhist idea of *shoshin*, or beginner's mind. This approach guides people to experience life with curiosity and openness, helping them let go of old patterns. It is a way of being that encourages practitioners to abandon preconceptions, embrace the world with a sense of wonder and see things from a more optimistic perspective. By examining and releasing old ways of thinking, expressing gratitude and incorporating different practices, the mind, body and heart open to novel opportunities.

The Beginner's Mindset

"The idea of being open to the situation comes up repeatedly in meditative traditions," says Steve Rogne, owner and director of Zen Shiatsu, in Evanston, Illinois. He notes that in his practice, shoshin is an essential part of *shiatsu*, a form of massage therapy that uses gentle pressure to stimulate the body's acupressure points and meridian channels. Shoshin can aid in unblocking stagnant energy and harmonizing the flow of *qi*, or vital energy, in the body.

"As a situation arises, we have our natural responses, which may include wanting to change what is happening. Another perspective is to ask, 'What if I accept things the way they are?'" Rogne explains. "Accepting situations for the way they are is the foundation from which we can respond. It's like a preparation for action without being the endpoint. We can simultaneously be open and respond mindfully."

Pexels from pixabay/CanvaPro

Learning to accept what is happening can also help us break old patterns of thinking and reacting. "There is a very common human dynamic to move toward the things we want and away from the things we don't want; however, this can lead to a fixed response pattern that limits our growth," says Rogne. "In shiatsu, we help people to recognize those patterns and find the balance between active response and trusting with faith. This trains us to listen to our inner wisdom and relax into outcomes that aren't what we prefer."

Mindfully changing patterns can open us up to new experiences that we had previously shut out. "You may find a willingness to move forward in new relationships, even though you've experienced that relationships can be painful, or perhaps you find the willingness to speak up even though there's a chance you won't be heard in the way that you want," Rogne notes.

Keeping a receptive mind helps to open us up physically, as well. "In both shiatsu and the shoshin mindset, we trust that every person's body is already working on its own healing. When we let go of our fixed holding patterns, the internal circulation is freed up, leaving the best possible opportunity for the body to regain all the healthy rhythms of the organs and reduce conditions such as chronic pain," Rogne asserts.

Optimism

Having hope and confidence about the future is essential in cultivating a beginner's mind, helping to counter some of the fear and intolerance that can undermine our lives. "A shoshin principle is that there is not anything fundamentally wrong with us or with the world. This allows us to move forward with positive faith and engagement," says Rogne.

"Optimism is a belief that good things will happen and that things will work out in the end," says Victor Perton, founder of the Centre for Optimism, an Australian-based think tank dedicated to fostering realistic and infectious optimism around the world. "With optimism, we enter each experience expecting fresh possibilities, guided by a sense that there's something meaningful to discover."

This positive outlook has myriad benefits. "Optimism nurtures healthy longevity and acts as a powerful protector against major health threats like heart disease, cancer and dementia," says Perton. "Optimism also lowers the risk of cognitive decline, as optimistic people tend to be more socially and physically active, helping stave off dementia and age-related memory loss." A 2022 study of more than 150,000 racially diverse, older women published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* found that the most optimistic women were healthier, lived 4.4 years longer than the least optimistic women and were more likely to live past age 90.

A positive outlook can help navigate the stress and anxiety of life. "Optimism doesn't mean ignoring the challenge; it means approaching it with the belief that solutions are possible. Optimism and a beginner's mind work together in this way, helping us to stay open to new paths, resilient in the face of setbacks and appreciative of life's small, beautiful details," opines Perton.

Incorporating small, intentional practices into our day can help us cultivate optimism. "Smiling with genuine warmth—even at strangers—can shift our outlook, and asking others, 'What's the best thing in your day?' brings a positive energy to conversations," says Perton. He also recommends simple grounding practices like gardening, yoga and meditation to nurture curiosity and positivity, noting, "Through these small habits, optimism becomes a daily practice and, in time, a personal superpower for resilience and joy."

Reframing Our Outlook

Reflective practices encourage us to explore our goals with a fresh outlook. "Journaling is a practice that is just for you, and you're

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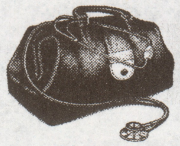

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Applying Shoshin to Everyday Life

by Carrie Jackson

Kalika Yap, a Los Angeles-based serial entrepreneur, author, coach and podcast host, offers these tips to cultivate shoshin, or beginner's mind:

- **Acknowledge wisdom and smarts, then set them aside.** While it is okay to recognize our knowledge and experience, it is also important to consciously set aside preconceptions before approaching a task or problem.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Replace statements with questions, such as: "What if we tried this other way?" or "How might we solve this differently?"
- **Embrace curiosity.** Approach each day with a learner's mindset and seek out new experiences and perspectives.
- **Practice active listening.** Value the input of others, regardless of their level of experience, and listen to understand, not to respond.
- **Reflect and adapt.** Regularly reflect on experiences and what has been learned, and be willing to adapt the approach based on new insights.
- **Encourage team creativity.** Emphasize the importance of a beginner's mindset within the team and create an environment where team members feel safe to share new ideas.
- **Welcome failure as a learning opportunity.** View failures as opportunities to learn, grow and analyze what went wrong to see how to make improvements next time.
- **Stay humble.** Approach every situation with humility and a willingness to grow, and remember that there is always more to learn.

Adene Sanchez from Getty Images Signature/CanvaPro

not intending to share it with anyone else," explains Shawn Brown, a Baltimore-based wellness facilitator and yoga teacher who helps clients find a path to being their authentic selves. "It really allows you to examine what is popping up and what you are curious about. This might be learning a new language or starting a new yoga practice. When we look at things as a beginner, we are open to what we are truly interested in."

A regular gratitude practice also helps bring us back to a place of grounding. "When we tap into gratitude, it expands our propensity to be creative and allows us to drop into the present moment. This is where we live, but when we think of the future or ruminate on something that happened in the past, we are pulled out," says Brown. She encourages clients to take breaks throughout the day and recall a person, place or experience for which they are grateful. "Think about something that makes the corner of your mouth turn into a smile," she suggests. "It can be as simple as gratitude for your partner who bought dog food or a neighbor who moved a package off the porch. This brings us back into our lives right now, and that's where the beginner is."

Cultivating a sense of play can also tap into a shoshin mindset. "As adults, there's a need to have a goal or expected result in any situation. When you're a beginner, you don't have a specific outcome because you're just learning. Play, especially with kids or an animal, is free-form engagement without the need to get it right or check something off our to-do list. Releasing the need for control and perfection opens us up and expands us for so many other options and possibilities," Brown says.

Brown encourages her yoga students to be open in the way they approach their practice. "Coming into a pose in a different way can give us a new experience of it," she says. "My approach to yoga is not that we're trying to do the posture, it's that we're trying to feel the posture. It's a mirror of our being and can indicate if you are feeling strong, tired, energized or wobbly. Rather than attaching a label of good or bad, you just notice, and that opens us up."

Especially in the new year, Brown urges clients to replace "I have to" with "I get to," which presents more of a growth mindset. "This is the time to reframe our goals," she points out. "Trying something new, like taking a West African dance class instead of your regular spin class, shakes up the routine and keeps your mind and body learning. You get to be pushed out of the comfort zone, and that's where the magic happens."

Carrie Jackson is a Chicago-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. *Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.*

New Uses for Old T-Shirts

Allison Cherry from Getty Images/CanvaPro

Many people have T-shirts that are faded, worn, torn, out of style or don't fit anymore. Before throwing them out, consider giving them a new life as a useful item for personal or home use.

Scrunchie: Cut a 21-by-3.5-inch strip of fabric and fold it in half, lengthwise and inside-out. Sew the long edges together to make a tube. Turn the tube right-side-out. Thread an 8.75-by-one-quarter-inch piece of elastic through the tube and tie the ends of the elastic. Sew the ends of the tube together after folding in the edges to create an even seam.

Tote Bag: Start by cutting off the sleeves and neckline so the shirt resembles a tank top. This will be the top of the bag. Turn the shirt inside-out and mark a horizontal line across the shirt for the bottom of the bag, leaving at least 2 inches below that line. Using scissors, cut three-quarter-inch-wide vertical strips from the bottom of the shirt to the line drawn, cutting the front and back of the shirt at the same time. Take the first pair of fringe pieces (a front piece and its back piece) and tie them into a knot. Continue across until all of the pairs are tied. To further close any gaps, grab the top strand of the first tied set and tie it in a knot with the bottom strand of the set next to it. Repeat until all the strands are tied. Finally, flip the bag right-side-out again to hide the fringe. Alternately, to keep the fringe as a visible part of the bag, turn the shirt right-side-out before tying any pieces.

Dog Tug Toy: Using scissors, cut a shirt into thin strips, stretch the strips to reduce elasticity and then braid them together tightly. Tie a knot at each end and play a game of tug-of-war with the dog.

Gen AI/CanvaPro

Memory Quilt: Cut each shirt as close to the neckline as possible, in a consistent size with the graphics in the center. Organize and lay out the squares. Stitch or sew the T-shirts in columns, then sew the columns together. Add batting and backing. The other side of the T-shirts can be used as the backing fabric, if assembled the same way as the front.

Braided Basket: The first step is to create braided yarn. Cut the T-shirt into long strips about two inches wide, and stretch the fabric to increase length and reduce elasticity. Braid three strips together. To add new material, overlap the end of the new fabric strips with the end of the existing strips and sew or glue them together with fabric adhesive before continuing to braid. The second step is to arrange the braid in a circular or oval pattern to the desired size and use heavy-duty thread to sew the braid to make the bottom of the basket. Using another braid, sew it to the outside of the bottom of the basket and then upwards to make the sides. Add a double-braided handle and sew it to the top of the basket.

Cleaning Cloths: For shirts too worn to upcycle, cut them into squares and use them as cleaning cloths. When they are dirty, throw them in the washing machine and reuse.

Gladys McGarey

on the Secrets to Health and Happiness at Every Age

by Rose Winters

Recognized around the world as the mother of holistic medicine, Gladys McGarey was a physician and activist who inspired new ways of thinking about disease and health. Throughout her expansive career, she championed the integrated use of healing methods from Western, Eastern and Indigenous sources; advocated the use of food to prevent and treat disease; and promulgated the idea that illnesses offer glimpses into our inner selves.

McGarey practiced medicine for eight decades, was the co-founder and former president of the American Holistic Medical Association (now called the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine) and co-founder of the Academy of Parapsychology and Medicine. She was one of the first medical doctors to use acupuncture in the United States.

In her book, *The Well-Lived Life: A 102-Year-Old Doctor's Six Secrets to Health and Happiness at Every Age*, McGarey offers both practical advice and inspiring wisdom drawn from her own life, as well as from the experiences of patients, family and friends. Here is a selection of excerpts from her book.

Secret I: You Are Here for a Reason

Each of us is here for a reason, to learn and grow and to give our gifts. When we are able to do so, we're filled with the creative life energy that I call the "juice." The juice is our reason for living. It's our fulfillment, our joy. It's what happens when life is activated by love. It's the energy we get from the things that matter and mean something to us.

Secret II: All Life Needs To Move

Consider life flowing like a forest stream. A tree falls across the stream, creating a small dam, and some sticks come along to build the dam up a little higher. Downstream of the dam, the water flow may slow significantly, but it usually doesn't stop completely. Even if it does, the water continues to flow upstream of the dam, and the movement can be seen in

the rising waterline. At some point, the water reaches the top of the dam and a trickle forms on one side or another, going around the dam and continuing downstream.

Life reaches for life. Always. That means that when we feel the most stuck, whether physically, emotionally, situationally, or any other way, we may need only to look to where things are still moving. When we put our focus and our energy there, a trickle will form around our dam. Aligning with this trickle will help us realign with life. When we do, we can get up and start moving again. Once that happens, all we need to do is keep going.

Secret III: Love Is the Most Powerful Medicine

Love dispels fear, but it is also blocked by fear. The two are often presented together because they're constantly in a push-pull game with each other. If fear is our habit, practicing love is a wise solution. And that practice will take us far, because love is infinitely stronger than fear—always. Just as our bodies are born to breathe air, we are born to love. That's why although it's good to address our fear, it's even better to focus on our love. Any effort we put toward love—truly, any effort at all—will self-perpetuate, bringing joy, health, and well-being into our lives.

Secret IV: You Are Never Truly Alone

There's a danger in thinking that we have to agree on everything to enjoy each other's company. This pushes everyone to extremes. It's natural that when someone's life looks like ours, it's easier to find common points of connection. But it's sometimes the people who are most unlike us who push us to see things in a new way. That means there's great meaning in interacting with people we don't like that much. When we approach people who think very differently from us with curiosity instead of condemnation, we grow.

Secret V: Everything Is Your Teacher

True optimism isn't toxic, because focusing on the positive does not mean denying the negative. It does not mean we dissociate from our pain, whether it's physical or emotional, or pretend that things are okay when they aren't. Instead, it means we look for what's wonderful anyway. We allow what hurts to hurt while continuing to search for the lesson in it and be grateful for the teaching.

Secret VI: Spend Your Energy Wildly

Love is always worth your energy. Always. Lean into what you love, whom you love, how you love. Love is an endless font of life force, and it's always there for you.

Excerpts are printed by permission of The Foundation for Living Medicine, created in 1989 by McGarey to bridge the gap between holistic and allopathic medicine through research and education. To learn more or to make a donation, visit FoundationForLivingMedicine.org.

Rose Winters is chief executive officer of The Foundation for Living Medicine and a consultant addressing nonprofit strategies with a special focus on women, health and children.

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Serving up Happiness

Foods for Better Moods

by Zak Logan

Most of us feel a little grumpy when we're hungry, but a diet that is dominated by ultra-processed packaged foods and drive-through meals increases our chances of experiencing chronic mood swings and symptoms of depression. Ultra-processed foods are characterized by a long list of additives—artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, preservatives, salt and more—resulting in products that do not resemble their original natural state.

In a 2022 study published in *JAMA Network Open* involving more than 10,000 participants aged 18 or older, individuals with a higher percentage of their total energy intake from ultra-processed foods were significantly more likely to report mild depression and more mentally unhealthy and anxious days. Research involving more than 31,000 middle-aged women published last year in *JAMA Network Open* linked a higher consumption of ultra-processed foods, especially artificial sweeteners, to a higher risk of depressive disorders. Reducing ultra-processed food intake by at least three servings per day lowered the risk of depression.

In order to produce serotonin, dopamine and other neurotransmitters that are crucial for balanced mental health, our bodies require vitamins, minerals and other nutrients found in real, whole foods. The Mayo Clinic recommends avoiding processed meats, sugary beverages, sweets and refined grains, and it gives a thumbs-up to feel-good fare on the Mediterranean diet that includes plant-based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains; healthy fats like olive oil; lean meats, including fish and poultry; and some dairy, such as natural cheese and yogurt.

Brain Changers

According to Holly DeLong, a registered dietitian and the founder of Food & Mood, in Malvern, Pennsylvania, "Food is a form of medicine, and we truly can make big improvements in our mental and emotional well-being using the intersection between nutrition and mental health. Food, gut health and nutrient status all affect neurotransmitter production and balance. Certain nutrients are required to produce neurotransmitters." She recommends the consumption of mood-friendly, B-vitamin-rich leafy greens, avocados, lentils, sunflower seeds and nutritional yeast, as well as magnesium-packed whole grains, tofu and bananas.

"What we eat influences key systems in our body, especially blood sugar, gut health and inflammation, and these impact mood, energy, stress and anxiety," says Amy Fox, a certified functional food coach and life coach in Cincinnati, Ohio. "Think of each meal as your 'nutrition prescription'. These choices almost always predict how you'll feel in a few hours. A helpful rule of thumb is to aim for foods with five ingredients or less and limit boxed, bagged or wrapped items." She also

notes that high-sugar items, especially before bed, are the worst offenders.

What we eat, and when, can improve the body's chemical balancing act. "Meal timing can be a huge factor in how food affects mood. Skipping meals and eating too close to bedtime can contribute to poor energy, lower moods and higher anxiety for some people," explains DeLong.

Fox notes that consuming alcohol can also backfire. "Sometimes we think a glass of wine will help us unwind after a long day, but it has the opposite effect. Even small amounts of alcohol can disrupt the production of our natural happiness chemicals."

Gut Health

Because 95 percent of serotonin is produced in the gut, nutritionally dense foods and those containing probiotics and prebiotics promote the presence of good bacteria in the belly, which ensures the production of this neurotransmitter. Fox recommends three daily servings of fermented foods like kefir, kombucha, kimchi, plain Greek yogurt and naturally fermented sauerkraut found in the refrigerated section with "live cultures" on the label.

DeLong's favorite go-to allies are sources of omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, walnuts and chia seeds to combat inflammation, an integral factor in fighting the blues. She praises the antioxidant potential of berries, acai and pomegranates, and suggests swapping coffee for L-theanine-rich matcha green tea to decrease systemic patterns of anxiety.

Protein Power

Protein is an unsung hero in eating to feel better. "A craving for sweets might indicate a serotonin deficiency often linked to stress and low energy," says Fox. "When you eat protein-rich foods, they help slow digestion, keeping blood sugar levels stable and providing a longer-lasting energy source." She recommends lean chicken, beef, eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and legumes.

Consistent Change

According to DeLong, "Neurotransmitter health is not a predetermined, unchangeable defect as it is often seen. We can make an impact with the choices we make."

Simple, consistent changes in the diet can produce lasting effects. "It's about small, supportive choices that build up over time, shifting focus from restriction to nourishment," says Fox.

Zak Logan is a freelance health writer dedicated to getting back to basics.

FEEL-GOOD PROTEIN SMOOTHIE

YIELD: 1 SERVING

¾ cup ultra-filtered protein milk (found in many grocery stores)
1 scoop protein powder (whey, soy, egg white, pea or hemp)
½ frozen banana
Handful of frozen strawberries or other berries
1 Tbsp of flaxseeds
¼ cup of zero-percent-fat, plain Greek yogurt
Handful of kale

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend well. To thicken, add a few ice cubes or place smoothie in the freezer for 7 to 10 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of Amy Fox.

ildipapp/CanvaPro

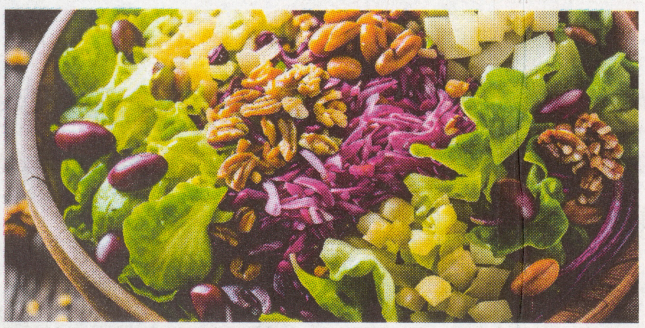
SUSTAINING GRAIN BOWL

YIELD: 1 TO 3 SERVINGS

1 cup whole grain of choice, cooked (millet; wild, brown or black rice; buckwheat; quinoa; farro; or amaranth)
1 to 3 cups vegetables, raw, lightly steamed, roasted or sautéed
4 to 6 oz of lean protein of choice, cooked (lean meat, egg, beans, legumes, tempeh, tofu or fish)
⅛ cup nuts, seeds, sprouts or avocado

Cook grain, vegetables and protein, depending on choice of ingredients. To build, layer grain as the base and add vegetables, protein and toppings.

Recipe courtesy of Holly DeLong.



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EASY SERENITY SALAD BOWL

YIELD: 1 SERVING

2 cups mixed greens of choice (baby lettuce, mustard, chard, spinach, arugula or chicory)
¼ cup fermented veggies (kimchi or sauerkraut)
¼ cup cooked beans (kidney, black or garbanzo)
1 Tbsp flaxseeds
2 Tbsp walnuts
1 Tbsp lemon juice
½ Tbsp olive oil
Optional: grilled salmon or avocado slices

Mix greens, fermented veggies, beans, flaxseeds and walnuts in a bowl. Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil. Top with grilled salmon and/or avocado slices.

Recipe courtesy of Amy Fox.

GUT-FRIENDLY BROCCOLI NUT SOUP

YIELD: 3 SERVINGS

1 yellow onion, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
2 celery stalks, roughly chopped
¾ tsp dried thyme
5 cups bone broth
1 cup raw cashews
1½ lbs Yukon gold or white potatoes, diced (approx. 3½ cups)
7 cups broccoli florets (approx. 1 large head of broccoli)
½ tsp sea salt or to taste
½ tsp black pepper or to taste

Add onion, garlic, celery and 2 to 3 tablespoons of water to a pot. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes until softened, adding more water as needed to prevent sticking. Add the thyme and sauté another 30 seconds until fragrant.

Add broth, cashews, potatoes, broccoli florets, salt and pepper to the pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Once boiling, lower the heat to medium and cook for approximately 6 to 8 minutes until the potatoes are fork tender.

Use an immersion blender to puree the soup in the pot or carefully transfer the contents of the pot to a stand blender in batches and puree.

Serve with crusty bread or garnish with croutons.

Recipe courtesy of Holly DeLong.

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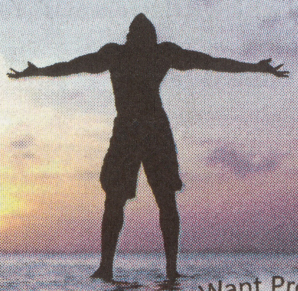

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Advancing a Couple's Fertility

Natural Solutions for Women and Men

by Madiha Saeed, M.D.

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The prospect of parenthood can bring a range of emotions to couples trying to conceive—from excitement and jubilation to worry, frustration and sadness. According to the World Health Organization, one in six people worldwide experience infertility in their lifetime. Many couples hoping to conceive turn to costly medications and painful procedures designed to manipulate hormones, help with ovulation issues and prepare a woman's body for pregnancy.

In addition to researching such medications and procedures, couples should explore natural alternatives that nurture and support their ability to conceive. "Fertility is not just about hormones," says Nashat Latib, a certified functional medicine doctor specializing in natural fertility. "Consider what is going on in your whole body."

"Males and females are equally at the root of fertility struggles, and sometimes the roadblocks can come from both sides," observes Aumatma Simmons, a naturopathic doctor, endocrinologist and author of *Fertility Secrets: What Your Doctor Didn't Tell You About Baby-Making.* "It is essential to pinpoint the root causes of fertility problems."

For women, fertility rates naturally decline with age, from a 25 to 30 percent chance of pregnancy in their early-to-mid-20s to about a 5 percent chance by age 40. Other health concerns such as ovulation issues, endometriosis, uterine fibroids and polycystic ovary syndrome can complicate conception and the ability to carry a baby to term.

When fertility issues arise, often the focus is placed on women, but about half of the cases can be attributed to the men. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 12.8 percent of men aged 25 to 49 experience infertility, and the rate is rising. Factors like low sperm production, poor sperm quality, oxidative stress, blockages preventing sperm release, undescended testicles and cancers contribute to male infertility. Other health problems, including diabetes, infections, hormone imbalances, autoimmunity and tumors, can impact both men and women.

Rainbow Nutrition

Diet plays a significant role in overall reproductive health. Simmons stresses the need for a diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, healthy fats and

whole grains to provide the essential nutrients that support fertility. Phytonutrients—natural compounds in plants that provide health benefits—optimize male and female fertility and help the body eliminate toxins. Simmons also recommends limiting processed foods and refined sugar, which can negatively impact hormone balance.

"Nutrients found in cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy and kohlrabi can help regulate and metabolize hormones," says Latib. "Nutrients found in grapes and berries can improve the quality of the eggs and sperm by reducing oxidative stress; protect reproductive cells from damage; support successful embryo implantation; regulate ovulation by modulating hormone levels; and promote hormonal balance. Compounds like lycopene in tomatoes and watermelon have been shown to improve sperm motility and boost immune function by providing antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds."

Latib adds that pairing foods from different color categories in meals helps maximize the positive effects of phytonutrients. Examples include a berry smoothie with spinach, a stir-fry dish with a rainbow of vegetables, a tomato and mushroom frittata, a cauliflower rice bowl with turmeric and veggies, and a kale salad topped with sweet potato.

A Clean Lifestyle

Toxins are all around us, and hormone-disrupting chemicals found in cosmetics, plastic packaging, toys, carpets and pesticides can have serious consequences for male and female fertility. Latib suggests using glass instead of plastic whenever possible and eating organic fruits and vegetables to reduce the pesticide and herbicide exposure.

"Be cautious of endocrine disruptors such as bisphenol A, commonly known as BPA, and phthalates that are used to make plastics. They are found in food packaging, water bottles and food-can linings," says Simmons, adding, "Even ingredients like 'fragrance' can contribute to hormonal imbalances and gut-health issues."

Stress can negatively affect fertility, underscoring the need for stress management. Simmons recommends quitting tobacco use, reducing alcohol intake and practicing yoga or meditation to improve overall reproductive health. Exercise can also reduce tension, improving health and fertility.

Latib recommends high-intensity exercise during the first half of a woman's menstrual cycle and restorative movement and exercise in the second half of the cycle. For men, she notes the importance of supporting testosterone levels with regular exercise and sufficient sleep, limiting unhealthy environmental exposures and consuming adequate levels of nutrients like zinc and vitamin D.

Reducing Inflammation

Chronic inflammation can negatively impact fertility by disrupting hormone balance and damaging reproductive tissues. Oxidative stress occurs when the body's free radicals and antioxidants are not balanced, leading to damaged reproductive cells and fertility issues.

Both Latib and Simmons recommend working with a fertility specialist to assess a couple's health, fertility and lifestyle factors. The assessment should include hormone testing to measure levels of testosterone, luteinizing hormones, follicle-stimulating hormones and prolactin; nutrient testing for zinc, selenium and antioxidant levels; a gut-health assessment; and a thorough evaluation of environmental toxin exposures.

"Your body is smart," emphasizes Latib. "Nothing is unexplainable. If you are having trouble conceiving, there is a root cause. A functional fertility practitioner can guide you through the process."

Madiha Saeed is a holistic, functional and integrative doctor in Naperville, Illinois, and director of education for Documenting Hope and KnoWEwell.

Bonding With a Dog

Fun Tips To Build Trust, Calm and Companionship

by Ruth Roberts, DVM, CVA, CVH, CVFT, NAN

Engaging with the family dog can strengthen the relationship, improve well-being and bring joy. With a little planning, each interaction offers dogs and their owners a chance to exercise, bond, explore and have fun.

Benefits of Interacting With Dogs

In a 2020 study published in *Scientific Reports* involving 35 dog owners and 58 dog-human activities, researchers concluded:

- Physical interactions with dogs, such as playing, training exercises and being greeted by the dog, increased the owners' positive emotions, including happiness, joy and contentment, while at the same time reducing feelings of stress, anxiety and fear.
- Owning and caring for a dog was linked to an increased sense of purpose, meaning, responsibility and fulfillment, as well as a positive feeling of companionship.
- While not directly tied to dog-human activities, the general experience of having a dog contributed to a more positive outlook on life.

Dog-Owner Bonding

According to the National Institutes of Health, a strong bond with the family pet can lower a person's blood pressure and decrease levels of cortisol, a stress-related hormone. Playing or relaxing with a dog engenders a sense of safety, while also allowing the dog to feel calm and less reactive. Dogs that regularly share activities with their owners tend to show more affection, trust and excitement.

A 2024 Finnish study published in *Science Daily* determined that during interactions, dogs tended to be in sync with their owners' stress levels, as measured by heart rate variability. This suggests that a close bond between a dog and their companion can build an emotional connection and even affect

underlying physiological responses. What we do with our pets can have an effect on their emotional disposition, and ours.

Fun Activities

Carla Brown, a dog trainer and holistic pet health coach in Truckee, California, offers these tips to keep dogs happy and healthy.

Play and Exploration: Dogs are happiest when they can play and explore off-leash. This time is essential for their physical and mental growth. If off-leash spaces are not available, find other ways for the dog to play and explore.

Running and Playing: Running and playing release a dog's endorphins—hormones that can help reduce stress, anxiety and depression. These activities also improve brain function, support immune health, reduce inflammation and help regulate appetite. Varying the activities keeps them mentally and physically healthy.

Mental Stimulation: Teaching the dog basic nose-work skills is a great way to challenge their mind and provide calm, enriching experiences. Start nose work by tossing a treat for the dog to find. Use simple phrases like "Find it" or "Search." As the dog gets better at finding the treat, make the search more challenging by hiding treats in different spots. Dog puzzles, snuffle mats and frozen stuffed toys that hide a treat inside are other ways to teach nose work.

Safety Tips for Dog-Dog Play: Dog-dog play can be rough and scary to the inexperienced observer. They rear up, wrestle and use open mouths. When dogs play together properly, no one should get hurt. Good playmates take self-imposed breaks when play escalates too much. On the other hand, puppies need help to calm down and stop playing.

Tips for Human-Dog Play: Set clear rules and follow through to ensure play is fun and safe. Teach cues like "Sit" and "Give a hug." Don't allow rough play that promotes bad mouth habits. If a dog is used to roughhousing at home, they won't understand that it is not okay with others. Allowing the dog to jump on their owner when they come home might suggest that it is okay to jump on strangers.

Safety With Kids and Seniors: When it comes to playing with children or older people, the rules are stricter. Dogs should be discouraged from using their mouth or jumping on people. This is why controlling play is important. Giving the dog a cue to sit, wait, take or drop will help them calm down. If the dog has trouble calming down, give them regular breaks. The reward is playing by the rules.

Ruth Roberts is an integrative veterinarian and holistic health coach for pets, as well as the creator of The Original CrockPet Diet. Learn more at DrRuthRoberts.com.

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Calendar of Events

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2

50 First Jokes – 8pm. Start the new year off with laughter. $20. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3

The RFD Boys – 8pm. Legends of Michigan bluegrass. $16, $15/members, students, seniors. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

My Prairie Restoration Journey – 6:45pm. John Blair will bring you along on his journey to both restore his land to original native prairie and create magnificent pollinator gardens on his rural property in Brooklyn. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

Demo of Supine Massage – 11-11:45am. Patti Stephen, LMT, and AASM faculty, will demonstrate a half-hour anterior massage, in a quiet setting in our studio with some brief narration. A great opportunity to observe a half hour massage session, Q&A after. Free. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

Find Your Ideal Weight in 2025 – 1pm, Novi; 3:30pm, Dearborn. With Dr. Corey. Free lunch. BetterHealthMarket.com.

New Year Mindfulness Walk – 1-2:30pm. This meditative hike is focused on reconnecting with yourself and the natural world, which can be quite restorative during this dark time of the year. Led by naturalist Elle Bogle. Kidder-McKeachie Scio Woods Preserve, 4000 Scio Church, Ann Arbor. Registration required: Washtenaw.org.

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

An Evening with Author Melissa L. Sevigny – 6-8pm. She shares the story behind her book, *Brave the Wild River*. Discover the remarkable story of Elzada Clover and Lois Jotter, the trailblazing botanists who defied expectations to explore and document the Grand Canyon's unique flora in 1938. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Sunrise Nature Hike – 8:30-10am. Join naturalist Elle Bogle for a morning exploration of Fleming creek, the floodplain, and the forest of Parker Mill to discover the hidden treasures of the season. Parker Mill County Park, 4650 Geddes Rd, Ann Arbor. Registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers: The Mind of a Bee – 7pm. Professor Lars Chittka, author of *The Mind of a Bee*, will join us live from London via Zoom to share insights into his groundbreaking work on bee intelligence. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Open Stage – 8pm. Take your music to the masses. Open Stage nights offer supportive audiences and a terrific space. Performers have 8 mins (or 2 songs) each to do their thing. $3, free/members, students. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Stonefly Search – 9am-4pm. HRWC does stonefly searches to gauge the health of our streams. When you sign up to volunteer, you will join a small group of other volunteers to search a selected stretch of stream or river for stoneflies. Huron River Watershed Council, 117 N 1st St, Ste 100, Ann Arbor. 734-769-5123. hrwc.org/volunteer/stonefly.

Find Your Ideal Weight in 2025 – 12pm Shelby; 3:30pm, Grosse Pointe. With Dr. Corey. Free lunch. BetterHealthMarket.com.

Sugar-Tox Seminar – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free lunch. Better Health Market, 3344 Secor Rd, Toledo. BetterHealthMarket.com.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

Floating Sound Bath + Live Cello – 6:30-7:30pm. Drift into a state of pure bliss with an aloe + alchemy floating sound bath. Our unique blend of therapeutic sounds,

aromatherapy, guided meditation, soft lighting and gentle water creates a truly immersive experience for your mind, body and soul. $85. Detroit Athletic Club, 241 Madison St, Detroit. AloeAndAlchemy.com.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

Sugar-Tox Seminar – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free lunch. Better Health Market, 22250 Michigan Ave, Dearborn. BetterHealthMarket.com.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24

Ann Arbor Folk Festival – Jan 24-25. Includes a blend of well-known and up-and-coming artists, providing an opportunity to hear artists you know and love while discovering great new talent. More info & locations TheArk.org.

Sugar-Tox Seminar – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free lunch. Better Health Market, 44427 Ann Arbor Rd, Suite E, Plymouth. BetterHealthMarket.com.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

Sugar-Tox Seminar – 12pm. With Kathleen Freydl. Free lunch. Better Health Market, 14105 Hall Rd, Shelby Township. BetterHealthMarket.com.

Winter Tree ID – 2-3:30pm. Learn to identify several trees using only bark, twigs and buds. Led by naturalist Shawn Severance. Janice Anschuetz Highland Preserve, 325 E Clark Rd, Superior Charter Twp. Registration required: Washtenaw.org.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28

Artist Spotlight: Taimane & Her Trio – 8pm. A spirited night of captivating music and cultural connection. Free; please bring a nonperishable food donation for Food Gatherers. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

PLAN AHEAD

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Observe a Prone Massage – 11-11:45am. Observe a professional LMT faculty demonstrate a half-hour of posterior bodywork. Free. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Ongoing Events

DAILY

Ayurveda For Us – Provides online consultations, where clients receive personalized guidance to address chronic health issues and reclaim their vitality. With a focus on diet, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to wellness. To schedule a free 30-min discovery call: Calendly.com/d/4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call. For more info & appt: AyurvedaFor.us.

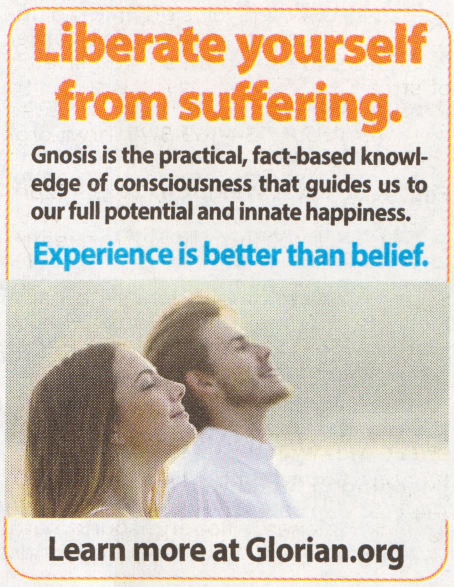
Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

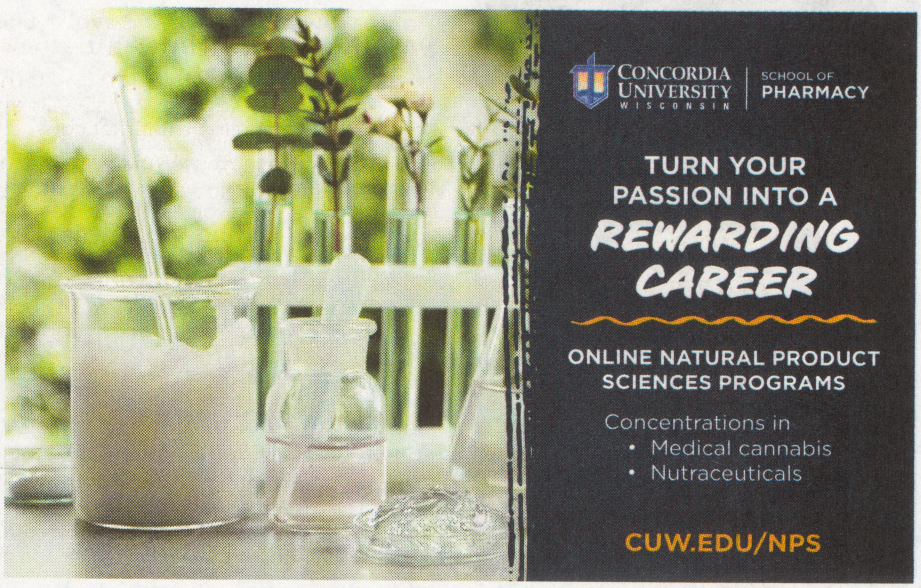
Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. $75. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Tai Chi or Chi Kung Early Bird Discount – Classes begin Jan 6-Apr 10. Start your New Year with a focus on self-care for your health. Reduce stress, improve mindfulness, improve balance, and enhance your well-being. Register early and get a $10 discount. Use code W2025. $215. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Holistic Health Consultation – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations take about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. $150. For appt: LivingWisdomCoaching.earth.

Pets & Parents Reiki Session – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end-of-life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn





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naturestradingpost.com
(989) 275-9976

additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. $20. 231-590-0001. TCDesoto@gmail.com.

The Best Affirmation for You – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. TinyLions.org.

Naturally Purifying and Supercharging Your Body Podcast – 7-7:45pm. Matthew Hazen is the owner of Human Consciousness Support, a company that produces a unique nutraceutical product called MasterPeace. Free. BuzzSprout.com/1206776/14236700.

WEEKLY

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. $79 (regular $149). Yoga Room, 889 Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDebBurton.com. YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care.

SUNDAYS

Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 Live Web – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. BachFlowerSchool.com.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. $10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.

Clearing Meditation – 11am. 4th Sun. Each person gets one question answered for healing an issue. In person. Troy. RSVP required: 248-789-1980.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Common Cycle Bike Repair Sessions – 11am-3pm. Learn about bike repair, share tools and build a sense of community. Volunteers ready to assist with maintenance issues or personal projects. 416 W Huron St, Ste 11, Ann Arbor. 734-619-0907. CommonCycle.org.

Critter House Open Hours – 12-3pm. A great way to get up close and personal with some fascinating animals, all while developing an appreciation for the incredible diversity of the natural world. Suggested donation: $5/person, $20/family. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

MONDAYS

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free; donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Beginner Tai Chi – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in a fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). $195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Mindful Dexter – 12-12:30pm. Last Mon. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Soul Power Mystic Arts – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling and cultivate the nature mystic within through 4 retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qigong, plant ally ceremonies and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. MotherBearSanctuary.com.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will

gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

WEDNESDAYS

Get the Most from Your DNA Test – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share that information. Course 39651. $59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. wccnet.edu/noncredit.

THURSDAYS

Move With Us: Trager Mentastics – Jan 9-May 1. 10-10:45am. 1st Thurs. This is a gentle form of movement that is low key, focused on the nervous system releasing restrictive patterns. $12 cash. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Also Fri. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Qigong: Basics – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. $180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). $195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles. Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

Thursday Evening Silent Meditation – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free; donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Mindful Dexter – 7:30-8pm. 3rd Thurs. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mid-month mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

FRIDAYS

Natural Turmeric Indian Wedding Facial for All – 9am-6pm. Design combines traditional ingredients like turmeric, used in Indian weddings for skin beautification, with modern machines that enhance the overall experience. Mahabir Wellness, 1640 Haslett Rd, Ste 100, Haslett. 517-325-9954. MahabirWellness.com.

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Online: Prayer Power Hour – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

SATURDAYS

Mindful Dexter – 9:30-10:30am. 2nd Sat. Includes a 25-30-min guided meditation, a few minutes of silent meditation, followed by time for comments/questions and a discussion on a mindfulness topic. Dexter Library, 3255 Alpine St, Dexter. 734-476-8474. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Herbal & Natural Medicine – 10am-12pm. 3rd Sat. Come see for yourself and experience our ongoing Herbal Medicine Natural Medicine Training, which is a preview for the 2025 Natural Medicine/Herbal certificate training starting January. Free. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal & Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Baby Classes – 6-7pm. Classes are held virtually online led by our top AID instructors utilizing state of the art visual aids and activities to keep it fun and engaging while presenting the latest evidenced based material on each topic. $35/class. Childbirth-Classes.com.

Your Mind Is Your Best Friend.

But It Can Also Be Your Worst Enemy.

Your Mind Is Constantly Sabotaging Your Potential For Both Performance And Happiness. All Your Negative Emotions, Including Stress, Are The Result Of Self-Sabotage.

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Aromatherapy

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Margo Hertzfeld, Certified Aromatherapist
419-360-0169
RosyGlowWellness.com

Clinically certified aromatherapist offers holistic consultations with customized blends of professional quality essential oils. Trust Margo to help you understand the complicated world of aromatherapy. Her holistic approach can help you maximize your benefits from this powerful therapy and minimize side effects. Aromatherapy is a wonderful way to integrate natural healing into your life. Phone consultations are available.

Biological Dentist

ANN ARBOR'S DENTIST
Dr. W. K. Dobracki, DDS
606 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, 48103
734-747-6400
DrDobracki@AnnArborsDentist.com
AnnArborsDentist.com

Passionate about holistic care while utilizing Bio-Compatible materials and lasers. Our patients can elect to be free from fluoride, mercury and other harmful metals. Filling materials are tooth colored and both BPA & Bis-GMA free. We offer natural oral health products using fine essential oils, and free of gluten and preservatives. *See ad page 3.*

Education

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN
School of Pharmacy
CUW.edu/NPS

Take the next step toward a career that makes a difference! Discover Your Future in Natural Product Sciences with our flexible graduate programs. Choose from a 30-credit online Master's degree or a 12-credit graduate certificate, both designed to fit your life and goals. Specialize in medical cannabis or nutraceuticals, and prepare for exciting roles in healthcare, pharmacy, research and development, manufacturing, business and beyond. *See ad page 25.*

Energy Enhancement & Wellness

MIRACULOUS ENERGIES
(A Private Membership Association)
MiraculousEnergiesAssociation@gmail.com
517-599-4949
MiraculousEnergies.com

The EESystem combines Body, Mind, Spirit and Science. This system generates multiple bio-active life-enhancing energy fields, including scalar waves and a morphogenic energy field, also known as scalar vortex. When combined with light as biophotons, it can interface with the body's DNA matrix and promote wellness. *See ad inside front cover..*

Holistic Doctor

DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.
210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor
734-332-9936
DrSickels.com

Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr. Sickels.com. *See ads, pages 8 and 11.*

Holistic Mental Wellness

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE COUNSELING
Karen Kerr, LMSW
2010 Hogback Road, Ste. 6E, Ann Arbor
734-660-5610
Karen8Kerr@gmail.com
KarenPKerr.com

In offering a caring, collaborative and supportive experience, I draw upon a holistic approach with a rich variety of practices designed to deepen awareness, uplift mood, manage stress and develop a stronger sense of self-worth, purpose, connection and joy in life.

Homeopathic Pharmacy

CASTLE REMEDIES
2345 S. Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor
In the Parkway Center
734-973-8990
CastleRemedies.com

Serving Michigan for nearly 40 years. Castle Remedies offers over 1,000 homeopathic remedies as well as herbs, essential oils, flower essences, books, unique gifts and jewelry. We carry top-tier nuitional supplement brands such as Metagenics, Ortho Molecular, Xymogen, Integrative Therapeutics, Karuna, NOW, and more. Classes available online. *See ad page 21.*

Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

ELEVATE MIND & BODYWORK
Sarah Girard BS, LMT
1140 N. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor
SarahGirard.lmt@gmail.com
Elevate.MassageTherapy.com

Take your wellness & spiritual journey to the next level. Sarah combines traditional "medical" Manual Lymphatic Drainage techniques with Reiki healing, breathing guidance, visualization & intuitive listening. All sessions are heart-centered, gentle, and geared towards radical self-love. Request an appointment today.

Mobile Holistic Veterinary Services

WHOLE LIFE VETERINARY SERVICES
WholeLifeVet@gmail.com
517-474-4050
WholeLifeVeterinary.com

Give your horse or pet the benefit of both worlds with a combination of Western medical knowledge and Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine and acupuncture in the comfort of your own home or barn. We are committed to providing you with the best holistic pet health. We provide holistic care, in-home euthanasia, and equine lameness care. *See ad page 23.*

Mold Testing & Remediation

MOLDPRO
John Du Bois, CMI, CMR, CCMI
247 W. Main Street, Milan
734-439-8800 · MoldProllc.com

MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

MICHIGAN FRIENDS CENTER AT FRIENDS LAKE COMMUNITY
7748 Clark Lake Road, Chelsea
734-475-1892
MFCenter.org/rent

We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from $200-$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. *See ad page 11.*

Neurofeedback

NEW MOON NEURO
105 E. Middle Street, Chelsea
734-210-1922
NewMoonNeuro.com

Located within ALCHEMY Holistic Collective, New Moon Neuro is the area's only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback Provider. Find lasting support for anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, OCD, addiction, TBI, migraines, pain issues and more - for the entire family. *See ad page 19.*

School/Education

ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE
734-769-7794
NSHAAssociates@gmail.com
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net

Massage therapy training is a one-year program that fulfills the 717-hour, state-licensed professional training with the required 80 hours of clinical internship. The rate for scheduled, Tuesday through Friday appointments at our student massage clinic is $50/hr.

Smoking Cessation

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS
Center - A Joyful Journey
734-883-8775

Stop smoking in one visit. Afraid it's going to be too painful or too difficult? Our unique specialized and proven system makes it easy. Become a happy and permanent non-smoker today. *See ad page 19.*

Tai Chi & Qigong

PEACEFUL DRAGON SCHOOL
1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor
734-741-0695
PeacefulDragonSchool.com

Tai chi promotes relaxation, is a meditation in motion and is known for increasing balance. Qigong means energy. This class includes Wild Goose Form, stretching, meditation and self-acupressure.

Weight Loss

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS CENTER - A JOYFUL JOURNEY
734-883-8775

Lose weight now with hypnosis. Achieve permanent positive life and habit changes through our safe, rapid and effective system. Tap the potential of your mind to create the health and vitality you've always wanted. *See ad page 19.*

Wellness Centers

CRYSTERRA WELLNESS
3173 Baker Rd, Dexter
734-649-1849
CrysterraWellness.com

Ancient inspirations for modern well-being. Supporting you and your wellness journey every step of the way with reflexology, reiki, lithography and yoga.

THRIVE! WELLNESS CENTER
148 S. Industrial Dr. Saline
734-470-6766
Thrive-Wellness-Center.com

Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. *See ad page 15.*

Turn Your Passion Into a Business

Own Your Own Natural Awakenings *Magazine!*

Make a meaningful impact in your community by becoming the owner of a *Natural Awakenings* magazine. Empower others with current, valuable insights and resources to enhance their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

As a franchise owner, you'll inspire positive change, provide readers with tools for healthier living and connect local businesses with an audience eager for transformation.

Why Own a *Natural Awakenings* Magazine?

- Create a Healthier Community: Be the go-to resource for wellness and personal growth in your area.
- Boost Your Income: Take control of your financial future with a proven business model.
- Enjoy a Flexible Lifestyle: Work from home while pursuing a fulfilling, dynamic career.

What We Offer:

- A proven business model with low startup costs.
- Comprehensive training and friendly, ongoing support.
- Flexible work schedule with many work-from-home opportunities.
- Access to a network of like-minded franchise owners.
- Financing Options Available.

Join a thriving network of passionate franchise owners reshaping the future of holistic health and wellness.

Call 239-206-2000 for a FREE evaluation of your community's potential. Learn more or apply today at:

Corp.NaturalAwakenings.com

Own a business that makes a difference.

Call for a free evaluation of your community's potential at 239-206-2000. To apply or learn more, visit Corp.NaturalAwakenings.com.

Add Your Community to Where *Natural Awakenings* Is Now Publishing:

- Atlanta, GA
- Boston, MA
- Broward County, FL
- Bucks/Montgomery Counties, PA
- Central Florida/Greater Orlando, FL
- Central New Jersey
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Columbia, SC
- Dallas, TX
- Daytona/Volusia/Flagler Counties, FL
- Detroit/Wayne County, MI
- Fairfield & Southern Litchfield Counties, CT
- Gainesville/Ocala/The Villages, FL
- Grand Traverse Region/Northern Michigan
- Greater Ann Arbor, MI
- Greater Lansing, MI
- Greater Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Genesee, MI
- Gulf Coast, Alabama/Mississippi
- Hartford/Tolland, CT - *Coming soon*
- Houston, TX
- Hudson County, NJ
- Jacksonville/St. Augustine, FL
- Lancaster/Berks, PA
- Lehigh Valley, PA
- Long Island, NY
- Milwaukee, WI
- Monmouth/Ocean Counties, NJ
- Naples/Fort Myers, FL
- New Haven, CT
- New London/Windham, CT - *Coming soon*
- New York City, NY
- North Central New Jersey
- North New Jersey
- Northwest Florida
- Palm Beach, FL
- Philadelphia, PA
- Phoenix, AZ
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Rhode Island
- Richmond, VA
- Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties, FL
- South Central Pennsylvania
- South Jersey, NJ
- Southeast North Carolina
- Space & Treasure Coast, FL
- Tampa, FL
- Tucson, AZ
- Twin Cities, MN
- Westchester/Putnam/Dutchess, NY
- Western Michigan

This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or the solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of franchises: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.

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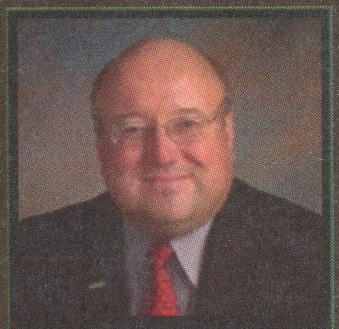

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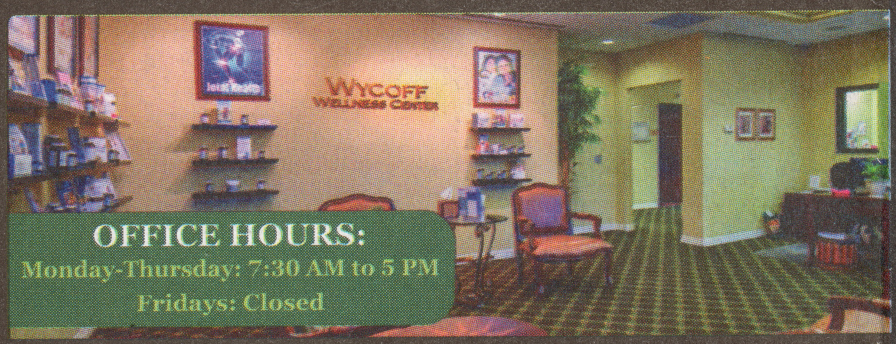

OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Thursday: 7:30 AM to 5 PM
Fridays: Closed